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Inside Information

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ALL ABOUT 14 COMMODITIES & PERHAPS MORE

A series of 14 impressive commodity papers has been released by USDA's Economics Management Staff in time for discussions related to the 1985 farm bill debate.

Prepared by a working group from USDA's Economic Research Service, the papers describe the structure of each commodity's industry, the history of government programs concerning each commodity, the effects of such programs, international implications, prices, farm returns and several other aspects, adjusted to each commodity.

Included are papers on barley, corn, cotton, dairy, honey, oats, peanuts, rice, sorghum, soybeans, sugar, tobacco, wheat, and wool/mohair.

Ben Blankenship, director of the EMS information division credits Jim Sayre, his staff chief in charge of economic research information, with the considerable credit due the publication of these papers.

Single free copies of these papers may be obtained from Donnel Royster, Room 0054-S, USDA, Washington, DC 20250, or call at (202) 447-7255.

CHALLENGE FORUM COVERS FARM PRODUCT USES

More than 50 industry, academic, government and press leaders meet Oct. 11-12 in Washington, D.C., to discuss new uses for farm products. They have accepted the invitation of Secretary of Agriculture John R. Block to attend his second "Challenge Forum," which will be held at USDA.

An exhibit will feature new products such as a space suit made from cotton and a "stripper" made of corn meal, which "strips" moisture from alcohol and other chemicals.

Both agricultural and scientific press members are expected to attend, along with the general press. They will have an opportunity to talk with the participants and officials the afternoon of the second day.

Public affairs specialists from USDA's Office of Information, led by team leader John Crowley of OI's Special Programs Division, worked with several other public affairs specialists from USDA agencies to develop information aspects of the Forum.

OKLAHOMA STATE WANTS A MANAGING EDITOR

Oklahoma State University is looking for a skilled person to fill the position of managing editor, agricultural press service, at Stillwater.

Charles N. Voyles, head of agricultural information services at the university, says the position requires a skilled journalist to act as the principal contact for the division of agriculture with state and regional newspapers and farm magazines.

An M.S. degree is preferred but a B.S. is acceptable if the candidate has the equivalent to an M.S. in length and quality of experience.

The salary is open, with consideration given to education and experience.

To apply, write Voyles at 102 Public Information Building, Oklahoma State University, Stillwater, OK 74078. His telephone number is (405) 624-6886.

HNIS HAS OPENING FOR EDITORIAL ASSISTANT

Oct. 15 is the deadline for contacting USDA's Human Nutrition Information Service concerning an opening for an editorial assistant at the GS-5 level.

Basically the job calls for reading manuscripts and making corrections in them.

Contact is Sarah E. Yates, Personnel Division, Food & Nutrition Service, USDA, Room 809, 3101 Park Center Drive, Alexandria, VA 22302. Her telephone number is (703) 756-3351.

INFORMATION OFFICE TO HELP 'REFORM '88'

USDA's Office of Information will undertake two specific projects in implementing that part of the Department's "Reform '88" program which is aimed at improving employee morale and productivity.

First, it will find a way to distribute the "USDA" employee newsletter to all employees, not a percentage of them, by the least costly mailing method. It will also replace Washington-based information in the newsletter with material on policy and administration that affects all USDA employees.

Also, OI will help the Secretary prepare videotapes addressing employees' concerns on a regular basis. The idea is that such videotapes would deal directly with employee concerns in such areas as policy changes, employee benefits and the Administration's position on proposed legislation.

These two actions are among the five short-term objectives recommended by a group of USDA employee representatives and implemented by Secretary of Agriculture John R. Block.

The other three short-term objectives, all part of Reform No. 9 of USDA's "Reform '88" program are: The creation of quality circles; establishment of a USDA employee idea week; and creation of a full-time position within each USDA agency to serve as liaison between employees, appropriate staff offices and top management.

A great many more details will be published soon in "USDA," in an article written by Susan Hess, public affairs specialist with USDA's Office of Management Reform.

JOHNSON CONJURES UP 'INSTANT NETWORKS'

Jim Johnson, chief of the Radio & Television Division of USDA's Office of Information, has a way of conjuring up an "instant network" whenever the occasion demands. A recent news conference by Secretary of Agriculture John R. Block is an example.

Block held a press conference in Washington, D.C., following President Reagan's announcement of Debt Management Initiatives by USDA's Farmers Home Administration.

Realizing there would be quite a bit of national interest in the subject, Johnson and some coworkers offered a live feed to some 20 broadcasters, many with networks of their own. As he expected, some 20 broadcasters picked up the offer, resulting in an "instant network" of 300 to 350 radio stations for the news conference.

Johnson has an arrangement to feed such events by telephone into a bridging system in Chicago called Darome, Inc. Each station taking part calls Darome for the feed.

In Washington, Johnson uses a specially-built "Bozo" box to feed news conferences into the phone line to Chicago. When the event is held outside Chicago, his team uses a portable machine to hook into the local telephone system.

'BEST EXHIBIT' SOUNDS LIKE EDEN

The best exhibit at the recent New York State Fair sounds a bit like the Garden of Eden.

Developed by a group of New York organizations, the exhibit featured live apple trees, a nutrition test, health information and a multimedia theater giving an overview of the state's agriculture.

Entitled "New York State Agriculture: Foundation for the Future," it occupied nearly 13,000 square feet.

Joint displays in the exhibit helped explain the interlocking relationships among the parties which developed the exhibit and shared the "best exhibit" award: The New York State College of Agriculture & Life Sciences at Cornell University, the Division of Nutritional Sciences at Cornell, the New York State Agricultural Experiment Station at Geneva, the New York State Department of Agriculture & Markets, the New York State Department of Health, and the state's apple industry.

ENERGY, TECHNOLOGY EXPO SET FOR ARKANSAS

On Oct. 12-14, the Mid-South Energy Project (a nonprofit, educational foundation) is sponsoring the Energy and Technology Expo, 1984, on the campus of the Mississippi County Community College at Blytheville, Ark.

An attendance of 50,000 is expected with 100 exhibitors and 14 workshops.

Bill Whyte, with the Special Programs Division of USDA's Office of Information, will speak on energy and agriculture and serve as a panelist in one of the workshops.

STUDY EMPHASIZES VALUE OF FARM MAGAZINES

When Nebraska farmers were thinking about major changes in their enterprises between 1972 and 1982, they chose farm magazines as their most important single source of information to guide them in that change.

That is among the conclusions of a pair of communications researchers at the University of Nebraska. The results of a study by John L. Adams and Anne M. Parkhurst have just been published, entitled "Farmer/Rancher Perceptions of Channels and Sources of Change Information."

Next in importance to the farmers and ranchers for change information were "newspapers, radio and television" and then "neighbors or other farmers."

Other channels of information in the top half of the importance scale were the staffs of private firms, Extension Service staff, Extension and Experiment Station publications, market reports, tours and field days, ASCS publications and finally ASCS staff.

Inquiries about the study may be directed to Dick Fleming, head of the Department of Agricultural Communications, University of Nebraska, 108C ACB, Lincoln, NE 68583-0918. His Dialcom electronic mailbox is AGS1450 and his telephone number is (402) 472-2821.

NOTE OF APPRECIATION...

Those of us in the Special Programs Division of USDA's Office of Information responsible for putting together and distributing "Inside Information" want to thank all of those who responded to our two recent surveys.

We asked all those receiving the printed copies of the information newsletter (the "pink sheet") to return the envelope address label with any changes and also an indication of how many copies of the newsletter you need for distribution to your information staff members.

Then we also asked those of you (more than 100) getting "Inside Information" via the Dialcom electronic mail system for your comments.

The response from the overwhelming majority of you in the latter survey was to "keep sending electronically the way you have been." A few did ask us to stop because you could wait until you got the printed copies.

So, we'll keep sending "Inside Information" electronically to those who didn't specifically ask us to stop, and we'll continue sending each page separately (although two of you asked us to send it as one straight message.)

The reason most prefer that we send each page separately is that it does give each receiver the opportunity to check the contents ("Inside This 'Inside'") at the top of the first page. You may decide after scanning the contents that you really don't need to "read" the remaining three pages and can wait until you get the printed copies in the regular postal mail.

We solicit your comments and suggestions at any time. We appreciate your comments, especially those of you away from Washington, D.C., about the contents of the newsletter.

And, we always welcome contributions from the readers of "Inside Information."

INSIDE INFORMATION is published for distribution to public affairs and information staff members of the U.S. Department of Agriculture, its agencies, State Departments of Agriculture and Land Grant Universities. Any items, comments and inquiries should be addressed to either John Crowley or Nancy Bevis, Office of Information, Room 536A, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, DC 20250 or to AGR002 mailbox on the Dialcom system, or call (202) 447-7454.

